Interview [P7]

P = Participant at case study institution

The following conventions are used in transcription of spoken interviews:

[replacement information in square brackets]

[redacted information in grey in square brackets]

[?] = unintelligible missing word(s); immediately following word = unclear[?]

[#] = redacted numerical information

CAPITALS to signify emphasis in speaking

((Extraneous information in double brackets))

Researcher: Anyway, so I sent you the questions in advance.

P7: Absolutely.

Researcher: And we don't need to stick to this. And and if there's anything you don't want to answer, you're obviously, it's entirely up to you what you want to talk about, it’s just to give a, you know, an outline of something to follow and make it a bit easier to to talk about.

P7: No, they are good. They're good questions, yes, yeah, yeah.

Researcher: It's difficult because obviously when you don't have insight into what everyone does, I don't, sometimes you think maybe the question’s a bit irrelevant to the people you're asking the question to, which is why I say please just skip anything that you don't want to talk about.

P7: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. No, they're fine. They're fine. Yes. Yeah, yeah.

Researcher: I'm so, yeah. So as a starting point, just to maybe if we, to warm up, and maybe you could tell me a little bit about your role as [position] or [position] at the [case study university]. So, kind of, what in general, I know it's a, I know you probably do a million and one things, but just in general.

P7: No, but it. Yeah, no, I think that the [unit] or the the [unit] has two priorities or two [?]. I can put it like that focuses possibly. And one would be [redacted identifying information]. So, we are in charge of university of [redacted identifying information] for students, but also for teachers, for researchers. So we're in charge of [redacted identifying information]. So [redacted identifying information] is one of our core areas and the other core area is [redacted identifying information]. So we are in charge of [redacted identifying information]. Let's put it like that, that means, we are not in charge of international degree seeking students, OK?

And but I can still talk about international design degree seeking students, because lots of your questions are about degree seeking students, international students. So, we make very often on the continent, we make a distinction between exchange students, international students as exchange students and international students as degree seeking students.

Researcher: So, you don't, you don't deal with say, do you deal with joint programs or things like that? Not so much so.

P7: I prefer not to.

Researcher: OK. OK.

P7: OK. Yes.

Researcher: So it it's more like. Yeah, sorry.

P7: It's more we do deal with [redacted identifying information] .

Researcher: OK.

P7: And but they are administered the decentrally in the faculties and and the departments. Let's put it like that. Yes. When in the end we are in charge, actually, when something comes up, we are in charge.

Researcher: Right, right. And how about staff? I mean is it that, do you deal with staff who maybe come on temporary contracts, international staff who are recruited to the university or no?

P7: [redacted identifying information]

Researcher: So I mean, the kind of work you're doing then is, is it quite closely tied [redacted identifying information] .

P7: Yes, it can be.

Researcher: So it kind of reaches out [?] does it or?

P7: It raises upwards, and it's both. [redacted identifying information.]

Researcher: And how do the [redacted identifying information] work then, so they they're also partners in terms of staff collaborating on research projects. Is that the way it works or?

P7: Yes. [Redacted identifying information] . And we do have some joint programs, not in the sense of no, [?] funding programs, not joint programs in the sense of joint degree programs. They're really the focus is on research and also, for example, we do fund [case study university], we we give funding to researchers.

Researcher: Right. OK.

P7: From the [case study university] to go to [name of university] for up to three months, for example, to work in a lab, for example, and collaborate with a with a colleague right there, yeah.

Researcher: And and the motivation behind that is really research in that you're you're hoping that they will establish collaborations that will lead to publications and funding and.

P7: Exactly. Class. Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. Yeah, classical. If you want to put it like that. Yes. That's one dimension of internationalization. Yes. Yeah.

Researcher: OK, that's interesting. Umm. So yeah, so internationalization, people use it a lot and like and it means so many different things, doesn't it? So. But I'm often when people talk about this increase, sorry, I should have actually introduced the project at the beginning. I keep forgetting.

P7: Umm, but I you've [?]. But you sent me the the, the, the, the description. Mm-hmm.

Researcher: Yeah. The forms. Yeah, but but just to recap, we're we're looking at how English language programs have increased in European countries. And so we started looking at the Netherlands because they had early implementation of these kind of programs, academic programs in English. And yeah, I'm looking at Austria and some other people are looking at Spain and Italy and possibly Romania. I'm not sure yet, but so yeah, we're looking at different countries in Europe at different stages of of this phenomenon, but we're assuming that it is that there is a momentum going that is in increasing in, you know, in general.

P7: Umm.

Researcher: And so, yeah, so so people often give internationalization as as a reason for this increase in English language programs. And I was wondering to what extent you think that applies, and if so what kind of forms of internationalization do you think kind of drive this, this trend?

P7:  
Internationalization has, is multidimensional, so from my university. And the recruitment of talent and students and PhD and both master students and and PhD students is one main motivation. Especially in subject areas where we have a lack of students. For example in [subject area], I know that our master’s program in [subject area] is in German. And but in order to to attract more talented students, we would actually like to teach it all to, to transform it into a EMI fully English taught master’s programs. And that is even more true of the PhD programs, we do have now doctoral schools, newly established doctoral schools, and they're all English speaking, meaning that we can recruit PhD students from all over the world.

And theoretically, because I still think there are cultural barriers, of course as well. And so we are not a marketized system. We are not a marketized higher education system. That means we are not interested in fee paying students, because our students hardly pay any tuition fees at all.

Researcher: Sure.

P7: We’re very interested in, in, in, in talent students, future researchers. Yeah, yeah.

Researcher: Yep, Yep.

P7: And I think that is, umm, go on, yeah.

Researcher: No, sorry, I didn't want to cut you off, but in the example you gave of [subject area] and and you said wanting to attract more international students, is it not the case that the numbers were dwindling of home students or is it a combination, they were. So it's a kind of combination of both like both the numbers and the talent.

P7: I think there were actually, it's a combination. Yeah, it's a combination of both. Yeah, exactly.

Researcher: Having yeah, having a broader pool of of people to draw from.

P7: Absolutely, it's it's really, it's really the the question of the size of the pool of students.

Researcher: OK. OK. Yeah. Yeah.

P7: Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. Yeah. Because our language requirement for German is C1. And if you want German C1, German is tough to get. It's [?] tough in, in English to to get to the level of C1. But you know, but we are all taught English, at least the younger generations. They're taught English from an early age on. So they have a chance of reaching, of reaching C1. Yeah. Yeah.

Researcher: Yeah, and but they're only required to have, are they, they're only required to have B2 for master’s programs in English I think usually, unless it's unless it's specialized in English language like, you know, literature or cultural stuff.

P7: Yep, Yep, exactly. It's B2. It's a B2 for English, yes, interestingly, C1 for German at our university.

Researcher: But you would expect it to be when you, I mean, if it is the language for, I mean if they’re studying the language, you would expect them to have a high level. I mean your courses in like I said in English and like sorry related to English language they are also C1, but the other ones that are not related to English language are B2 I think, I mean from what I've seen online.

P7:  
Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, they are. Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. Yeah, yeah.

Researcher: So are you aware of any kind of [?] any of this? Because we're also looking at governance. So for example, I've been looking at so the Universities Act 2002, which gave greater autonomy to to universities in Austria, and we're also interested in decision making at the level of governance, which is why I threw in this question about whether number 3, about whether any of these forces are shaped or influenced by decision making at the level of governance say, for example, within the university at national level or at supranational level. So are are you aware of of any of influences coming from different levels of governance that relate to internationalization?

P7: Absolutely yes. I think the most important influence is probably in the university level. I mean, for English speaking degree degree programs.

Researcher: Umm.

P7: And it's really up to the institute to the, to the, to the departments to decide in which language they wanna teach a course or a [?] in the sense of a degree program.

And so we and it's not really a decision by Rectorate. Of course, the Rectorate can push towards more fully English tool to degree programs and but in the end, it's the Senate that's the body of the well, I don't have to explain what the Senate is, it's a body of of of self-governance of academic self-governance. They actually decide on degree programs anyway, but yes. So I think the university level both at Rectorate but also at Senate and it's most importantly at diploma levels, they are a driving force, OK.

Researcher: Right.

P7: And and I think. The EU level is important in terms of the Erasmus program, so we do need to have enough English language courses in the sense of classes for Erasmus students. But of course that doesn't mean a whole degree program, but there's there's there's this has definitely also been a push. And also joint programs, dual degrees joint degrees, Erasmus Mundus, for example, are a driving force and, [redacted identifying information] joint degrees and dual degrees. They’re bloody, they're a bureaucratic nightmare.

Researcher: Yeah.

P7: So we try to avoid them. Yeah, or shut them down. [Redacted identifying information]

Researcher: Right. OK.

P7: And because it's a, it's really a lot of work for only handful of students, and we are a huge university and it's just something we can't do. And I mean in the long term.

Researcher: Yeah, yeah. Are cotutelles easier to do, yeah.

P7: Yeah, I think they are. Yeah, I think they are. Yes, it's it's not my [unit] that that is in charge of cotutelle, it's a doctoral centre, but that they have quite a good process to do that. Yes.

Researcher: Umm.

P7: And yes, we do prefer cotutelle. Yeah, yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Researcher: And I mean, how about the national level? So is there anything you notice coming down from the BMBWF that you, because when when I look at the, say, the National Development Plan, internationalization is one of the goals and and and they've now, yeah, they've now almost tried to conceptualize it in some way in the latest one with reference to what's her name, Betty Leask, some of her work. She's an Australian.

P7: Yeah, yeah, yeah, I know. I know her. Yeah. Yeah. In internationalization of the curriculum. Yes.

Researcher: Yeah, yeah. So I'm. So you know the it's kind of in the national development plan and of course in your universities development plan, they kind of align with this goal, don't they in terms of showing this.

P7: Yeah.

Researcher: Spirit towards internationalization as such and so are you, are you aware of any kind of influencing factors from the national level at all or or not so much in your work?

P7: Yes. No. There are influences. I mean, there is the national higher education high, the national mobility and internationalization strategy. And I don't know whether you aware of that strategy and we try to be in line with that strategy. For example, when it comes to digital form of mobility or other, and they are different objectives in, in, in the in this this strategy, but of course it's up to the university to decide which objectives are of revelant relevance for them. In the end, I think research is international. You can't [?] internationalized research because it's it's it's it's an international business. What is not necessarily international degree programs.

So that's where internationalization at home and the internationalization of their the curriculum comes in. And and there we still have a long way to go and I think English language programs are only one way of internationalizing the curriculum or internationalizing one form of internationalization at home.

And there has also been a recent study on the internationalization at Austrian universities. And yes, and we had to and make a list of all the international or English language degree programs. I think about 30 pro- percent of our degree programs that master’s levels maybe 25 or are in English. So that's quite a lot already for a German speaking university. All the other doctoral programs are in English, or at least they’re bilingual.

Researcher: Is that, I’m sorry. Is that for your own publication or was that a research publication or it was like a study that you're university just did for itself or?

P7: Not no, no, it was not. It's the IHS that did it. Do you speak German?

Researcher: Yeah, but I didn't understand. Sorry the organisation?

P7: Eh. It’s the institute [?]. It's a study on internationalization of of the Austrian higher education sector. I think it was published in, in English. I'm gonna write it down. No, no, don't worry about that. Yeah, I'm not. I don't worry about that, no, don't worry about that at all.

Researcher: Because it would be good for me to to take a look at that.

Researcher: I mean, I I saw your in internationalization report and I think you know I I think it said that it's like [#]% or something but.

P7: Yeah, exactly. Yeah.

Researcher: At the moment of master’s courses I I think when I try to calculate it myself of the Internet and stuff, it was slightly lower, but I think you know have some programs in the [unit] which are privately funded, so it might depend whether you add them on or not, but they've only got a few of them in English so I don't know if it would make that much difference. But yeah it yeah I guess, I mean.

P7: Maybe it's only [#], yeah.

Researcher: I are you. Are you aiming for more or or where do you see this [?]?

P7: No.

Researcher: Umm are you not? No. So it's it's.

P7: No, I'm not aiming for more because it comes naturally to be quite honest. It also comes with the [?] recruiting our in the academic star[?] recruiting.

Researcher: Right, yeah.

P7: And and and I I don't think we need. Ohh, how can I say that? But first of all, it's not up to me me um, it's not up to me to decide whether it makes sense to have more English language courses, and we already have quite a few. As I said, and at master’s levels maybe [#]%, maybe I'm mixing up the figures, but as you say, it's not really that important, the figure for us, but it's pretty good already in my opinion.

Researcher: Yeah.

P7: And in the end, we're still German speaking university. We don't have any English language bachelor programs.

Researcher: Yeah. Umm.

P7: And now that is perhaps a disadvantage, but the reasoning is that we are also training our educating students for the for the regional and for the local labor market. And they also need to be able to speak German and ideally the the bachelor programs are bilingual.

And some classes courses in English and others in German. Or maybe the literature in English and the textbooks and the the the papers and the teaching in in, in German. But more and more of our professors actually prefer to teach in English, also at bachelor levels because they were they spent 10 or 20 years in the US or in the UK. They come back, they made, might even be German native speakers, but they just find it, they're more comfortable teaching in English because they know that   
terminology.

Researcher: Yeah. So the the program might officially be in German, but there's a lot of English within the teaching that's going on already. Yeah, yeah.

P7: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Absolutely. Yeah. Yeah, yeah.

Researcher: OK. So I mean, so do you think that basically this kind of attracting students but also international staff is is what results you said naturally, so that kind of naturally results in more English language programs or a shift towards English language program. Do you think there's any other sides of internationalization that result in that in English language programs or is it mainly to do with um what? What, what, when you said it kind of naturally comes out of it, what, what were you thinking about when you said that?

P7: Yeah, to dangerous word. I'm sorry, I'm aware of it. That's a dangerous word. And I think it's just that the higher no, no, at the higher education sector is just a very internationalized business. Let's put it like that.

And if we want to recruit the best professors? Some of them do arrive in [case study university] and they don't speak German. We have a requirement for them to learn German within three years so that they can teach in German. After three years, I think we don't check on that. Actually, most of the this professors who stay here for a long time, after 10 years, they do speak German, even if they're Americans or Brits. If I if I can put it like down[?] because they're not, you know, because they're not.

Researcher: Even if they're British [?].

P7: Even if, because they're not because they're not normally used to learning foreign languages, that's what I mean.

Researcher: Right. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

P7: But they feel more comfortable speaking [?], it's speaking English or teaching in English, which is perfectly fine.

Researcher: Yeah, yeah.

P7: But having said that, I have to say that most of our um academic staff that we recruit is, just speak some German. Some of them are, especially professors, they they are Germans or Austrians who spend a lot of time abroad, that UK universities or in Australia, and they they come back to to, to Austria. Our postdocs are often only English speaking. They don't, and they're they're only here in [case study university] for a few years, so they don't bother learning German. Mm-hmm. Uh-huh.

Researcher: When I looked at the I'm sorry this this isn't directly I guess related to your work, but when I looked at the unidata database you know the one that BMBWF kind of publishes online, I saw there’s a huge amount of German speaking, recruitment and well from Germany.

P7: Yeah, good point you did. Yeah, they do, yeah.

Researcher: But very few from Switzerland. But you don't know if they're German speaking Swiss. But and you know, so I I was just wondering because even they compiled the data they compile the data separately you know. So it's like it's like umm, you know the data for the home university the the one that someone graduated from how many are recruited from there then Austria then Germany then the the other EU.

P7: Rest. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Researcher: The other, so the data are even compiled separately from the EU data and I was wondering you know, I mean there must be some counterbalancing of English influence that comes through the recruitment of German speaking staff as well. No, I mean it to some extent, it must preserve the German language. It's not like English is dominating completely.

P7: No, it isn't. No, the working language is still German at the [case study university]. I mean, there are some departments or or research labs where English is the working language, but the administration still works in in, in German.

And the secretary's work chat in German. So it it really is, I think one, so it's still a German language and and and and university.

Researcher: Umm.

P7: And I know that we do hire a lot of many of the professors that we hire are [?] Germans, and it's also political issues because the pool of talent, you know, talented professors is of course, a far larger in Germany then in Austria or also in Switzerland, because Switzerland is also a small country.

Researcher: Yeah.

P7: And. So it's useful [?] to be able to speak German if you come to the [case study university].

Researcher: Right.

P7: And and I think most of the people that we do recruit actually have some kind of German language and and background. So we are a very internationalized university because but the rules are very Germanised university [?], be trying not to recruit only Germans, obviously because we need to have a little bit of a, a broader balance.

But I mean, many Austrians actually are professors in Germany. If you look at the figures of how many Austrians are professors in, in, in Germany, and how many Germans are professors in in, in Austria, then you know it kind of it kinds of it evens out.

Researcher: Oh does it OK.

P7: And the administration really does have a problem with non German speaking staff, to be quite honest, it's it's it's it's, it's a disgrace. It's a nightmare.

Researcher: Do you mean they should be given more support or there isn't enough support at the moment for um them to deal with English language, or in what way do you feel it's a disgrace?

P7: Well, first of all it's it's a, it's an English language problem that administrative staff doesn't always speak English. So that's one thing. And the other thing is that there is a complete lack of intercultural knowledge, I'm I'm now saying knowledge OK, and also understanding because I if you have only ever worked in Austrian system, you only know you know what at payslip looks like in Austria. But you don't know what the payslip looks like in other countries. Looks completely different, in the UK deductions actually are far lower. So how do you explain a payslip for example to someone who is not Austrian?

Researcher: Umm.

P7: Um ohh. So when it comes to, so yeah, that's that's one example for example, and not being aware what the problems are that foreign and international recruited foreign and and staff have, OK not being aware what could be a problem. [Redacted identifying information], so for me it's actually quite a I I I'm more aware of these problems and you know what you're struggle with when you move to another country.

And yes, so let's put it like that, especially our [unit] still has a lot of of catching up to do. And of course that also means that newly recruited staff, especially postdocs, are not given the support they need to come to Austria like, you know, with visas and and finding accommodation and and and settling in. Yeah, yeah, that's definitely not very good at our university.

Researcher: Right, but I mean, presumably the [unit] would also benefit from some kind of training or support in that area or or no.

P7: Yeah, absolutely. Yes. Yeah, they would. Yes. Yeah, yeah. But they're stretched.

Researcher: I see.

P7: The the research[?] to resources.

Researcher: In in your, OK, sorry, I know you know, you said you didn't deal directly with this, but do you think that the drive for international students differs at master’s and doctoral level? So you mentioned the doctoral school, so that's being kind of built up and has been implemented. I guess you're saying that the programs will be in English then for that.

P7: Yeah, I think at doctoral level um academic aptitude or research aptitude is is more important than at master’s levels, yes. So the motivation is slightly different. We want to have talented students but at doctoral level, talented student means talented for research and for, for for a research career at master’s level you still don't know whether you know what [?], what career path they're going to take. Yeah. So I would say that is probably the most important and and different and the most important difference.

Researcher: Yeah. Are you aware of any kind of policy requirements that make it maybe difficult for the university to internationalize at the different levels of, say, within the university or at the national level or at the supranational level. Or is it relatively easy for internationalization to take place?

P7: It depends on what kind of, what forms of internationalization. So teaching in English teaching in English is not really that much of a problem. I mean, teaching individual courses in English is not really that much of a problem. And as I said, joint programs, joint degrees, double degrees are are a bureaucratic nightmare. I think it's a level of legal requirements. It's a mixed a mix of legal requirements and internal processes, so.

And [redacted identifying information] prefer not to have joint and dual programs. I think there are other forms of internationalization that are just as useful like, you know, study abroad semester or a traineeship or something like that. And at the moment I don't know, but the at the international, at the new Erasmus program is a bureaucratic nightmare. But yeah, yes, that's a new program generation, yes. So and so we spend a lot of we we spend a lot of time just fulfilling the administrative requirements.

So, but what else could I say, no? So I would say it's a mixed. So there are some I think joint dual degrees and double[?] degrees are probably the really the most the they are the most policy hindrances or and in in that area, yeah, yeah.

Researcher: OK. And so, I mean, in your view, what are the benefits of internationalization to the university, including its community, so to staff and students?

P7: Yeah, I think for students, for example, a mobility semester or an exchange semester or a traineeship in another country can just be a life changing experience. I think that that's, you know, it's personal growth. Personal development is also good for their language skills. They need to become fluent in English. So, so when I talk for, then we would like our graduates to be fluent in English. We would like them to be competitive in the in an international labor market.

Researcher: Umm.

P7: And we would like them to be able to work in an intercultural environment and also in intercultural virtual environment. And we would like them to be global citizens, so quite a lot actually, OK.

And with regard to academic staff, especially researchers, I think research is international and so most of our research staff, our academic staff, works with colleagues from at other universities and I think for the university of benefit is that we become more visible through our international stuff/staff[?] through international copublications and and yeah factors like that.

Researcher: How about financially? Does it benefit the university financially, the internationalization or?

P7: No, that's a good point. Actually, no, it doesn't, because we don't um we we because we're in, we are not in a marketized in the system. So we we're not charging we are charging fees but the fees are I think €750 for a student per semester.

Researcher: Umm yeah.

P7: So we're not making money. Yeah.

Researcher: And I mean I in your international report, I think it said it had quite a high number. It said that [#]% or something I think of active master students were from the EU anyway, so that you know you're not, you're not charging fees for them obviously either so.

P7: Yeah, exactly. And for non EU we we charge 750, maybe it's €1000 [?] but compared to fees in the UK, that's still quite affordable. Yeah.

Researcher: Yeah, yeah, I think it's a bit mad in the UK, isn’t it.

P7: Yeah, it's not as mad as as as the US, but yeah, yeah, it's never as bad as the US, but we're not, I mean. Personally, I I sometimes we do have the postgraduate programs and they are, they are they.

Researcher: Right, right. Yeah.

P7: And and there I think we we could actually have a financial benefit, but as you said, most of the courses are still in the in the in the [unit] are still in in German. So I think they haven't taken advantage of the benefit of internationalization, of the financial benefit of our internationalization. Yeah. Income, yeah.

Researcher: Yeah, because that was. Yeah, that was one of my first thoughts was when I stumbled across that, OK, because also through the autonomy that's granted to universities, you also have the ability to generate your own income, don't you? And then I saw this and I thought, oh, maybe this is where they're getting some money. But then I thought, well, no, there's only a few programs in English, so that that's not, you know, that's not a financial motivation for Englishization as such. So, but how about are there indirect, so, I mean, apart from tuition fees, umm, like, say, from funding from the BMBWF. Do you think that internationalization might contribute financially in other ways like other than tuition fees? Or are you not?

P7: So it only I think we probably have to look for competitive funding like we get quite a lot of ERC grants. But again, you'll see grants are research grants, they are financially interactive. But, and if you're not an internationally oriented research, you're never going to get the near ERC Grant, OK, but again.

Researcher: And that's for research. Is it rather than for?

P7: That, but there's for research. Exactly, but for, for for for teaching. No.

Researcher: Umm.

P7: And Erasmus Mundus, of course, we do get some money for Erasmus Mundus grants, but, as I said, they are a bureaucratic nightmare, so we spend just as much money on the administration. So yeah, yeah, yeah.

Researcher: Yeah, yeah.

P7: Yeah. Yeah. So that is not really that attractive, no. And we are now part of a [name of alliance]. And what the focus of [name of alliance] is, is on teaching and on internationalization of teaching. But at the moment, and I think that the financial aspect is not in the foreground out either.

Researcher: That being being part of this [name of alliance] doesn't generate any income in of itself.

P7: No, no, no.

Researcher: It's just indirect benefit, yeah.

P7: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Researcher: I'm so I mean, apart from the many benefits that you've you've discussed, do you feel that presents any challenges at all? Also.

P7: Yes, I think the most the most, the the biggest challenge is for the administration, I would say yes.

Researcher: Right. OK.

P7: I think as I just what I said before.

P7: And the administration is still very Austrian.

Researcher: Umm.

P7: Very German speaking. And not very internationalized in the sense of having with with an international background. Of course, people can be Austrian and and, but they may have lived abroad and bring an international mindset. But that's really not the case yet. OK, but we're learning, we're learning as a as a university. So I think that is probably the difficult the most, the the biggest challenge is, is is the administration.

And the academic, I nothing I've heard of to be quite honest for students. I think our new degree seeking students, they are not, we need to set up buddy programs for them. We do have some buddy programs for new international students in, in certain, for example, I think in [subject area] and [subject area], but not for for other international students, they feel a little bit, I think they feel a little bit lost as far as I can see. I'm not in charge of them, but that is my impression because we don't charge them €10,000 a year. We don't really have the services.

Researcher: Umm.

P7: And and the special services for them, they are just treated like every other new student.

Researcher: Right, right.

P7: And it can be a little bit discouraging for them. On the other hand, we have quite a lot of good services for new students, for all new students, Austrian and non Austrians. And of course they can take advantage of those services as well.

Researcher: How about internationalization at home. So do you think there's any kind of?

P7: Oh, that's a challenge as well. Yes, that's because it's it's, I think [redacted identifying information]. But in the end it's it's it's not. It's difficult. It's a cross cutting issue internationalization, and internationalization of the curriculum as well, and I don't really have any formal authority, so it's a topic that I can just, I can be a champion and try to. To to to push for internationalization of the curriculum[?] and the internationalization at home, but it's always in it's in other people's authority to decide on on the internationalization of the curriculum.

And so that's a bit of a challenge actually. I personally I think we're not taking enough advantage of our international student body. It's a resource you could actually use in your in your, in your degree programs. We don't really use do that. All they I would very much like to push and virtual teaching [?] forms of cooperation, digital forms of cooperation that would teaching cooperations. But that's also something that I can only lead through example through persuasion. I have to talk to the Vice-Rector for teaching, and we have quite a lot of constraints in teaching. You know, it's it's quite a lot of work, for example, to set-up an digital teaching cooperation between two universities.

Researcher: I think now digitalization is also on the National Development Plan as one of their priorities, isn't it?

P7: Absolutely, yeah. Yeah, it is, yes. Yes. Only trying to push for it. Yes. Yeah, yeah. But, um, the teaching load our professors have is quite large. So if they want to internationalize their teaching, for example, form an international teaching cooperation, that of course is is, is quite a lot of work, additional work and some of them are just not willing to do that.

Researcher:  
Yeah. Right, right.

P7: So that is definitely also an obstacle or a or a challenge and. So it's the workload that comes with digital forms of cooperation.

Researcher: Do you ever come across any sense of oh, sorry, I think I've gone slightly over time. Are are you still?

P7: No, no, it's OK. No, no, that's fine. I thought that it's an hour, isn't it? That's OK. Yeah, it's fine. Yeah, yeah. Because because I think we still, we still need to talk about English as a medium of instruction because I think that's.

P7: I think there's no. I'm not quite sure, but I'm not sure how much it will awareness there is at our university what English as a medium of instruction implies, as far as I know, there are no quality assurance mechanisms. At least that's what I know. And you know you need to use different teaching methods if you teach in a foreign language and you teach to an audience that is not, that doesn't have English as a native, as a native language, and I'm not sure how much awareness there is for for that issue.

And again, that's a teaching issue that's not in my authority. What I can do is perhaps push for some training courses. And in English as a medium of instruction.

Researcher: The the impression I got is like that. You don't, you don't feel there's any kind of tension between German and English kind of within within the university in terms of English kind of dominating or them being competitors competing for for space. It's quite happily married together, basically. I mean.

P7: Yes. Yeah, yeah, that's. Yeah.

Researcher: I mean other than the practical issues you've talked about, for example with administration or possibly with teaching. But otherwise there isn't a kind of tension between one or the other, or there's no concern that English might start to dominate over German or no.

P7: No, no, no, no. I think the working language is still, still German. And the academics are all bilingual.

Researcher: Mm-hmm.

P7: And and students need to become bilingual to some extent. And and the administration is firmly German speaking. OK, OK. But no, there is. It's not an issue. It's not something that we talk about. I mean it's all or it's not an issue yet perhaps.

Researcher: Umm. Right. Can you could you see it developing as an issue and their future you think German is stable enough? And I guess also because you recruit a lot from Germany as well, don't you so?

P7: I I no, it's not really an an issue. I don't think it's going to become an issue, at least not in the medium term. Maybe in the long term if all the the degree programs we offer, if we start offering our bachelor programs in English. Yes, we're gonna have a problem with the with, I think with the ministry to be to be quite honest.

Researcher: Really. Because I mean, with the bachelor's programs, I mean, you know, some people are so kind of at[?] the norm that some people assume it's, there's a legal constraint, but then other people say no, there's no legal basis for this. So, it's just a kind of a principle, I guess.

P7: Yes, it's a principle. Yes, I think it is a principle because most of our students are Austrians. And they're from [city] or from Austria and.

Researcher: Umm.

P7: I mean, I wouldn't mind some bachelor programs to be in English, to be quite honest. Why not? But but not the majority. Probably because we still are a German speaking university? OK, that's a political issue, but personally I feel that.

Researcher: Umm yeah.

P7: I mean, it's the it's a taxpayer who pays for the university. OK? So really, I think our focus should be on educating Austrians.

Researcher: Right.

P7:  
In if if at some point I think if if we start educating, I don't know if people from outer like let's say hundreds of Indian or Chinese students at bachelor level and with Austrian taxpayers’ money,  
does that still makes sense? I think that then you get into attention there. I think that would be a probably a challenge or attention at some point, but we are not there yet. When it comes to PhD students, it's different because we're really preparing PhDs for researchers for a research career or a or a professional career in in highly qualified and and jobs. Yeah. Yeah.

Researcher: Right. And they're being whittled down as well because you've got these new policies that that have come in to make it more restrictive at PhD level [?]. So hopefully maybe fewer PHD's but higher rates of completion. Yeah.

P7: Exactly. Exactly. Yeah, exactly. Absolutely. Yeah. Yeah, yeah.

Researcher: Do you? Do you know these policies that came through were they just were they at the national level? Because I've seen these clauses in the I've seen them in the Universities Act, but I'm not sure when those were added and whether the [case study university] itself decided to make things more restrictive because I I heard in 2018 it became more restrictive.

P7: Yes. Yeah.

Researcher: Umm, was that a university decision on its own? Or do you know if that was driven from a national?

P7: I think those were umm, yes, that was before my time. But I remember that I think in 2018 we set the level for German to C1. Is that what you're talking about?

Researcher: I mean about being more restrictive about applicants, so from PhD, so you have to you all you have to already have a supervisor in mind who's agreed to supervise you. You have to write a proposal, making it more restrictive to actually get into PhD program and such, but I wasn't sure.

And and I know that in the in the 2002 Universities Act it says you can do that for for a doctoral level, but I I wasn't sure what made it more restrictive from 2018 if it was in the university itself, for something beyond the university, it was the university. Yeah.

P7: Now it was the university itself, we wanted to to increase the quality of our doctoral students, the the quality of our of the dissertations they write, and we have a lot of, oh, we used to have a lot of and what it's called an external doctoral student, i.e. maybe someone working and or having a job and and working on their PhD on the side, which is hopeless to be quite honest because these people never finish.

Researcher: OK. Yeah.

P7: And so, you know. And so you would have them in the files for 10 years or so. You know, there would be a doctoral student. So we just wanted, we wanted to increase completion rate, we wanted to increase the quality of the block list students. And we wanted to increase the quality of the dissertations and also the quality of the supervision as well. Yeah. Yeah. So it's definitely a quality related decision and it's working.

Researcher:  
OK. Yeah.

P7:  
Yeah, yeah, yeah, that's good. Yeah.

Researcher: So is there anything else I haven't given you a chance to talk about or something really obvious that I've missed in this discussion possibly.

P7: Maybe the migration issue is something, it's just something that occurred to me. And  
migration in the sense of, it used to be very easy to, how can I put it like that, how well I put it, sometimes students I don't know from Pakistan and Bangladesh, from these countries, they want, Iran as well, obviously they want to get out and they they do they it was it in the in the past it used to be really easy to.

And immigration[?] is that how you say that in English to involve at at the [case study university]? OK, there were hardly any quality assurance and mechanisms. So so.

Researcher: OK.

P7:  
And then study place at the [case study university] was used as a as a way to to migrate to Austria without the intention of actually taking, taking up of studying at the [case study university].

Researcher: Umm.

P7: And that created an issue with the migration authorities. And and it's one of the reasons why we set the level for German, for all the[?] degree programs, for to C1.

Researcher:  
Right, right. You know when, when that was, when, when did you set the level? I mean, roughly speaking, you know not.

P7: 2017, 2015 something like that. Yeah.

Researcher: OK, so before then, they didn't need to. A German language requirement or they needed a lower one.

P7: I don't, I don't know a lower one probably and it was just easier to it just used to be because we have *freier Hochschulzugang* OK. And of course that you that. I know that we have. We had troubles with with the [city] migration authorities because they felt that we would involve, you know, our enrollment rules were too lax and that the [case study university] was really used as a channel for migration. But that was really before my time. So, so, so I don't wanna talk about this. I can't really say anything definite about it, but it's perhaps also an issue you need you need to look at.

Researcher: Umm. And and this *freier Hochschulzugang*? Is that somewhere in law? Or is that again a principle?

P7: Those are principle, and it's probably a principle, and in law it's both a principle and in law it's in the university. So everyone with the Maturazeugnis is allowed to enroll at at the Austrian University. That said, there are degree programs where you have entrance exams, actually quite a lot of them at the [case study university].

Researcher: Yeah. And and is that I'm sorry to to ask about the law, but that would be something beyond the the universities like 2002, or would there be something?

P7: I don't know in which the way it is to be quite honest, it would probably be in the Universities Act 2002. I would assume because it's *Zugang* [?] and it would be.

OK. But it's also a principle. It's like the principle that. And we we don't have that, that higher education is not a business, OK.

Researcher: Yeah. Yeah. We used to have that principle in the UK.

P7: OK, OK. So do you mean that can change?

Researcher: Yeah, yeah. Things have changed quite a quite a lot.

Yeah. Anyway, thanks so much for your time and for speaking about so many different things. And. And yeah, the transcripts, really, and I'm gonna pour over this and and pick all the things that and see.

P7: Yeah, I hope it was useful because I've been we were talking, we were talking about different things, different aspects. But yes, I hope. Well anyway it was it was fun talking to you. Thanks a lot. Thanks.